

Association of Late-Deafened Adults

March 29, 2004

WT Docket No. 01-309
RM-8658

Section 68.4(a) of the Commission's Rules Governing Hearing Aid Compatible Telephones

Comments in response to Petitions for Reconsideration and/or Clarification of the Hearing Aid Compatible Telephones Report & Order

The Association of Late-Deafened Adults, Inc. (ALDA) provides these comments in response to the petitions for reconsideration filed by various parties.

Established in 1987, ALDA is an international organization providing support and advocacy to individuals who were deafened after acquiring speech and language skills. ALDA advocates for communication equality and promotes equal access for its members throughout all aspects of society.

Late-deafened adults who use hearing aids are a significant number of the 6 million Americans who wear hearing aids and the thousands of users of cochlear implants. The ability to use digital wireless telephones is a major concern of our members.

Our members continually emphasize the need for immediate access via wireless telephones in emergency situations and as well as to communicate in their workplaces and to keep in touch with their families. They have watched the continued migration of others to digital wireless telephones and they believe that digital wireless access is a necessity, not a luxury.

It appeared that access was finally at hand with last year's announcement of regulations that set forth sound basic requirements and a reasonable phase-in period. ALDA members believe that the FCC was correctly filling its role in establishing these regulations and that most of the concerns raised by the parties requesting reconsideration have already been raised and addressed in the process of deciding on the details in the regulations.

ALDA strongly supports the comments submitted jointly by Self Help for Hard of Hearing People, Telecommunications for the Deaf, Inc. and the National Association of the Deaf on March 22, 2004. Their comments encompass the views of our members. We urge the Commission to reject the various requests for reconsideration and continue to support their regulations on hearing aid compatibility for digital wireless telephones.

Thank you for the opportunity to submit these comments.

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